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DATE: October 3, 1962

204 The Vice President

FROM: Colonel Bunnell

RE: Appeal to NATO Allies on Cuba

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By John, NARS, Date 1-20-73

In late August by means of a message from Rush to U.S. Ambassadors in NATO countries, the United States appraised the Cuban situation and appealed to those allies to join with the United States in certain measures designed to bring certain pressures upon the Castro regime. Rush's appeal was valid in that the requested action was based upon all information available and was an honest recognition of all the unpleasant facts in Cuba. Basically he appealed to the NATO nations to avoid assisting and strengthening the economic and military potential of the Castro regime.

Rush's action was followed by an appeal in the North Atlantic Council in mid-September. Finletter summarized the U.S. position which was that the Soviet Union was, among other things, demonstrating insensitivity in NATO through the utilization of NATO ships to carry goods to Cuba. He recognized the possibilities for objections and disputes on the parts of various countries, but urged more forceful action. He made it clear that the U.S. was not asking the individual nations to wage economic warfare against the Soviet Union nor to engage in a campaign to starve the Cuban people as Moscow has charged. He singled out the U.S. purpose of simply calling for an end to the use of NATO ships, which primitive simply permits the USSR to use its own limited shipping for carrying arms and strategic materials.

Reaction, and actions by the Allies, has been disappointing. The U.S. and Norway, whose ships have carried the majority of the cargoes to Cuba, have taken the position that the imposition of government controls would violate their cherished principles of free shipping. Much discussion and explanation failed to conceal the unwillingness of these nations to take positive action. Turkey, a country which from an economic standpoint could least afford it, took the positive action of forbidding Turkish ships to participate in the Cuban operation in any form. In summary, the only positive agreement resulting from the discussions has been that of refraining from delivering arms to Cuba, but even in the case of strategic materials, the granting of credits and the transhipment of U.S. manufactured goods, no progress was made.

At last the futile U.S. efforts at persuasion are being abandoned in the face of allied indifference. On October 3, Finletter was authorized to notify the North Atlantic Council that the United States was taking certain vigorous steps to clamp down on the shipping problem to Cuba. In the first place, the United States

proposed to close U.S. ports to all ships of any country that is carrying arms to Cuba. U.S. government cargoes may be carried in vessels of companies which have engaged in Communist block-Cuban trade. All U.S. ports will be closed to any vessel which is on the same continuous voyage involving Cuba and the block. While the stern measure of closing U.S. ports relates only to the carrying of arms, the question of other kinds of shipments, including strategic material and other items, has yet to be resolved. Other actions will follow if the allies fail to respond to these measures.

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